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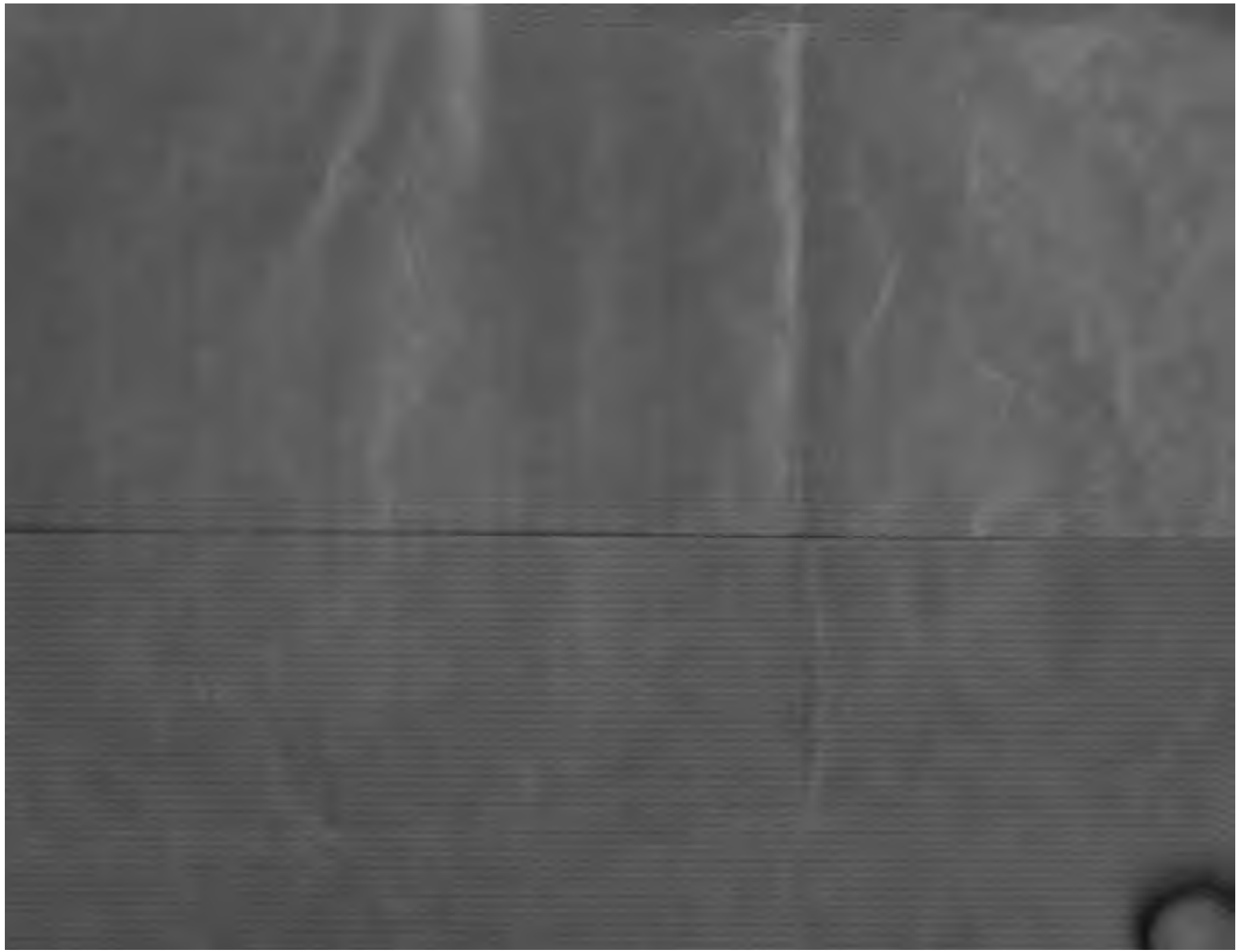
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ON THE

RESTORATION OF LEARNING

IN

THE EAST.

A POEM.

280

A

POEM

ON THE

RESTORATION OF LEARNING

IN

THE EAST.

BY

THE REV. FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A. F.R.S.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DIMOTAQUE VENIT SPECTANDA SCIENTIA NUBE.

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1805.

TO

LADY JONES

THIS POEM

ON

A SUBJECT INTIMATELY CONNECTED

WITH THE REVERED MEMORY OF SIR WILLIAM JONES

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Hummanby,
March 30, 1805.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reverend CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort-William in Bengal, and formerly a Member of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he proceeded to the Degree of B. A. gave to the University, in 1804, the Sum of Two HUNDRED and TEN POUNDS; desiring that it might be divided into the undermentioned Prizes:

I.

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS for an ENGLISH PROSE DISSERTATION,

"On the best Means of civilizing the Subjects of the British Empire in India; and of diffusing the Light of the Christian Religion throughout the Eastern World."

II.

SIXTY POUNDS for an ENGLISH POEM,

"On the Restoration of Learning in the East."

III.

TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS for a LATIN POEM on the following subject:

"Collegium Bengalense."

IV.

TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS for a GREEK ODE on the following subject:

"ΓΕΝΕΣΘΩ ΦΩΣ."

THE Gentlemen appointed by the University of Cambridge to award Mr. BUCHANAN's Prizes, after having adjudged the Prize for the English Poem to Mr. GRANT, Fellow of Magdalen College, unanimously expressed their Wish for the Publication of the following Poem: The Author, therefore, with a just sense of the honour which it has experienced, now submits it to general perusal.

ARGUMENT.

Creation. Light. INDIA. *It's vegetable, literary, and religious superiority over the Western World.* Brahma *introduces his superstition.* INDIA *still eminent in physics (particularly astronomy), metaphysics, ethics, and poetry — lyric, epic, and dramatic.* "The Fatal Ring." Mahometan *irruptions under* Mahmoud *of* Ghizni (*anciently,* Bactria) *A. D.* 1002, &c. Tamerlane. INDIA *totally degraded. Her* European *conquerors for a long time equally oppressive. Sir* WILLIAM JONES. *His attainments, and virtues; and premature death. The Marquis* Wellesley. *The New College at* Calcutta. CAMBRIDGE. *The Effects of "The Restoration of Learning" on the peasantry and manufacturers of* Hindostan — *Improvements in Chemistry, Medicine, &c. In Morals: In Social Feeling — The* Paria: *Mr.* Cleveland *civilizes the district of* Bhâgulpour — *and in Religion. The Missionaries. Apostrophe to* ENGLAND. *Contrast of her arts with those of* France. *Conclusion.*

THE

RESTORATION OF LEARNING

IN

THE EAST.

"LET there be light!"—So spake th' Almighty Word,
And streams of splendour gush'd around their Lord.
Forth at that bidding, emulous to run
His course of glory, sprang the giant Sun;
And, as he chased the scattered rear of night[1],
O'er the wide East diffused his earliest light.
There, while his infant beam on Ganges play'd,
Or hung entranced o'er Agra's spicy glade,
INDIA, first cherish'd with his orient ray,
Shone like a bride in brightest colours gay.
Cradled on earth's soft lap, it's lowly bed,
In blushing pride luxuriant Butea spread:
Itself a grove, the banyan there was seen,
Arch within arch, and "echoing walks between[2];"

(1) "Scattering the rear of darkness." (*Sacontalà*, Act IV.)

(2) MILT. *Par. Lost*, IX. 1107.

There Vegetation fix'd her choice abode,
And one sweet garden all the region glow'd.
When the world sunk into it's watry grave,
INDIA rose brilliant from the penal wave;
Shook off her stains, and rich in nature's charms,
Rush'd to the Sun's invigorating arms.
Rear'd in her fields, and foster'd by her skies,
The growth of mind attain'd it's loftiest size:
There where the mango swell'd on every bough,
And double harvests teem'd without the plough,
Her happy race knew none save letter'd toil,
And Arts and Science bless'd the genial soil.
Ere Revelation flamed from Sinai's height,
INDIA rejoiced in patriarchal light.
Tradition there preserved, from sire to son,
That first great truth, that GOD is All and One;
'Till fabling bards the mystic song began,
And learned darkness stole on wilder'd man.
His rigid code then selfish Brahma framed,
Then for his Caste it's proud distinction claim'd;
Waved o'er the cheated realm his ebon wand,
And scatter'd demon-meteors through the land.
So born and fed 'mid Turan's mountain-snows,
Pure as his source, awhile young Ganges flows;
Through flowery meads his loitering way pursues,
And quaffs with gentle lip the nectar'd dews;
'Till, swoln by many a tributary tide,
His waters wash some tall pagoda's side:

Then broad and rough, 'mid rocks unknown to day,
Through tangled woods where tigers howl for prey,
He foams along; and, rushing to the main,
Drinks deep pollution from each tainted plain.
Yet still kind Science, prodigal of good,
Smiled on her dusky suitor as he woo'd.
To him, while EUROPE's hordes lay whelm'd in shade,
Her fullest charms the radiant power display'd:
Show'd him the wonders of her secret lore,
The plant's retiring virtues to explore;
From midnight depths the sparkling gem to raise,
And bid it on the brow of beauty blaze:
Urged him afar to send his ranging eye
'Mid the bright orbs, that gild the peopled sky;
To trace the self-poised planets, as they run
In endless circle round their central sun:
See whirling earth, with two-fold impulse driven,
Wheel through the vast obliquity of heaven;
While day and night, and all the changeful year,
Turn as she turns and hang on her career:
Taught him, with useful fiction, to pourtray
The glittering monsters of th' ecliptic way:
Th' innumerous host of stars to group and name,
That pour on worlds unseen their solar flame;
Orion's might which wields the southern seas,
Arcturus, and the cluster'd Pleiades[3]:

(3) The knowledge of physics (particularly astronomy) by which the old Hindus were distinguished, as well as their metaphysic, ethic, and poetic fame, are briefly

Taught him with subtler skill, and better art,
To pierce the close recesses of the heart;
Hold moral beauty to man's raptured sight,
Guide him from passion's glare to reason's light;
And prompt him, to himself severely true,
His high descent to prove, his glorious end pursue.
Nor only Science led her Indian youth
With patient labour to the throne of truth,
Studious by just gradation to refine
From brute to human, human to divine;
But Fancy rapt him on her wing of fire
To realms sublime, where bliss outruns desire;
Where streams of crystal feed ambrosial flowers,
And love and glory speed the laughing hours:
There to his hand resign'd her powers of sway,
Her lyre, and liquid voice, and numerous lay;
Gave him her holy hymn, her lofty ode,
To sing the chieftain or to sound the God:
Gave him her stately epic, to rehearse
His Arjun's[4] fame with all the pomp of verse;
When Krishna, mounted on the hero's car,
Bore him secure amid the clanging war:

stated by Robertson, with his accustomed elegance, in the Appendix to his "Historical Disquisition concerning Ancient India;" and more at large by Craufurd, in his "Sketches" of that ingenious people.

(4) The *Bhágvat Geeta*, or "Dialogues of Krishna and Arjun," an extract from the *Mahabharat* (the great epic poem of India, written, if we may trust the chronology of the Brahmins, within a century after the deluge) was translated by Mr. Wilkins from the original Sanscrit in 1785. It contains all the grand mysteries of the Brahminical faith.

Gave him her drama's tearful vase, to pour
O'er virtue's sacred anguish pity's shower;
When soft Sacontalà[5] in Canna's grove
Press'd the fond pledge of her Dushmanta's love,
Or as her steps yet linger'd on the green
(Of all her infant sports the happy scene)
Wept o'er each flower, her garden's blameless pride,
Kiss'd the young fawn that sorrow'd by her side;
And still, to ease her bosom's bursting swell,
To flower and fawn prolong'd the sad farewell.

And did oblivion quench this hallow'd fire?
May Genius like the brood of earth expire?
With meteor front a few short moments soar,
Then sink forgotten, and be seen no more?
Ah! no: by age undimm'd his cheek appears;
His laurell'd brow defies th' assault of years.
'Twas Mecca's star, whose orb malignant shed
It's baleful ray o'er INDIA's distant head.
Fleet from the stormy west, on steed of flame,
To blast her bloom the Bactrian[6] archer came:
Beside him rode, twin ministers of fate,
The Lust of Empire and Religious Hate;

(5) See Sir WILLIAM JONES's elegant version of Calidas' drama, "The Fatal Ring." It's author, the Shakspeare of India, was the brightest of the Nine Gems, who adorned the court of Vicramáditya in the century immediately preceding the birth of Christ.

(6) Mahmoud of Ghizni; who, after desolating India by twelve successive irruptions (the first A. D. 1002), under the pretence of converting it's inhabitants to the true faith, founded a dynasty which lasted about 150 years.

And still, where'er their sanguine banners flew,
Spring's rosy splendours vanish'd from the view.
Her last faint throb of struggling life to crush,
See from the north remorseless Timur rush!
His drear morasses, and his boisterous sky,
The fire-eyed[7] Tartar quits without a sigh:
Calls his grim squadrons from their realms of snow,
And leads where zenith suns strange lustre throw:
By Bember's foot, who dreary, black and bold,
Stands the stern guard of Cashmere's vale of gold;
Through bowery Matra, where the Gopia nine
In love's disport with youthful Krishen join:
There while the mango from it's stem they tear,
Or light with saffron[8] wreaths their raven hair,
O'er INDIA's plains the myriad swarms expand,
And Science, Genius, Fancy fly the land.
So, 'mid th' effulgence of her ardent skies,
In the broad noon a spot is seen to rise,
Dread Typhon's cradle! O'er th' horizon's space
The monster spreads, till heaven scarce yields him place;
Then pours his fury, and with vengeful sweep
Bears houses, herds, and harvests to the deep:
Before the fiend the groves of Eden bloom,
Behind him scowls a desert and a tomb: —

(7) This was the peculiar feature of Tamerlane. "His eyes (say the historians) appeared *full of fire.*" Krishen and the nine Gopia, mentioned below, are the obvious prototypes of the Grecian Apollo and his Muses.

(8) The saffron flowers of the Michelia are used by the Indian ladies, to relieve the jetty blackness of their hair. (PENNANT's "Outlines of Hindostan.")

Thus INDIA, bright in fortune's favouring hour,
Bewailed the ravage of invading power.
Witness imperial Delhi's[9] fatal day,
When bleeding Rajahs choked proud Jumna's way:
Witness, Benares, thy neglected towers,
Where wisdom mused in academic bowers;
Their quadrant[10] curves where learned walls display'd,
And gnomon pillars threw their length of shade:
Witness the voice suppress'd, the silent shell,
Which erst in lovely strife were wont to swell:
Witness (ah! heaviest curse) the night of mind,
To Superstition's ghastly brood resign'd.
Now all her veins the lethargy invades;
Mute are her schools, and hush'd her warbling shades.
No more the Muse exulting Fancy fires,
Prompts the high thought, the lofty strain inspires:
Memory no more to the degenerate line
Points, where their country's ancient glories shine;
On youth's pure cheek bids generous passion glow,
Or lifts his arm to lay th' oppressor low.
Ah, wretched land! to every ill a prey;
Thy sons enslaved, thy cities in decay!
But light the chains, the abject frame that bind,
To those which bow to earth th' aspiring mind.

(9) When Tamerlane caused it to be destroyed, A. D. 1397, upon the pretext of an insult offered to his troops, after the horrid ceremony of the Joar.

(10) For a particular account of this celebrated observatory, see a Letter from Sir Robert Barker to the President of the Royal Society of London, read on the 29th of May, 1777.

Where once the Hindu his simple prayer preferr'd,
Where sweet his carol'd hymn of praise was heard;
His turf-built altar unembrued with blood,
His gentle heart's religion — to do good:
There in her grey shrine, with outstretch'd hands,
Her human food stern Cālica[11] demands:
There his huge car the monster-god[12] impels
O'er prostrate crowds, who count the crushing wheels:
There, from her babes by savage Brahmins borne,
The widow'd mother clasps her consort's urn:
With ill-feign'd triumph mounts his blazing pyre,
And sinks, proud trembler! in the sacred fire[13].
These, Superstition's execrable train,
Throng the vex'd soul where darkness holds her reign.
Thus, Elephanta[14], through thy cavern'd halls
Portentous sculptures frown along the walls:
With snaky wreaths, in strong projection bold,
Clasp the wide arch, the massive shaft enfold;

(11) The thirst for blood of this black goddess (the wife of Shiva, and the counterpart of the Tauric Diana or Hecate) is adapted in proportion to the dignity of her victim. After an offering of fish or tortoise, it soon recurs: by the sacrifice of a parricide for twenty-five, and by the tiger for an hundred years: but man is her favourite sacrifice, and his blood is effectual for a complete oblivion. This inner mission however, as Sir William Jones informs us, is now forbidden.

(12) Juggernaut. The car of this deity is four stories high, and moves upon sixteen wheels; beneath which, numbers of his deluded votaries annually throw themselves to be crushed to death, as a sure passport to immortal happiness.

(13) This custom still prevails in the Mahratta empire, and in the dominions of the ancient Rajahs, particularly amongst families of distinction. By the English it has been uniformly opposed.

(14) For a description of this stupendous subterranean temple consult Thevenot, Anquetil, Robertson, Pennant, &c. but especially Niebuhr.

And, as amid the gloom their forms dilate,
In the chill'd breast mysterious awe create.
When India saw Medina's crescent fail,
And the mild flame of Zion's star prevail,
Well might she hope the beam, which once had glow'd
To guide her sages[15] to the God's abode,
Would now, bright harbinger of peace! dispense
On her faint head its healing influence.
But ah! it rose in clouds: with sanguine glare
Ambition's comet fired the sickening air;
And, black exhaling from the putrid ground,
The mists of avarice heaven's blest radiance drown'd;
Breathed thick infection o'er the dawning day,
And quench'd the lustre of th' eternal ray.
'Tis past. Too long oppression's tyrant race
Have ground her children with their iron mace!
Too long has silence heard her whisper'd fears,
And glens impervious drank her flowing tears!
'Tis past. Her bosom stung with conscious shame,
Awaken'd Albion re-asserts her fame;
Inclines in pity to a groaning land,
Wrests the foul sceptre from the spoiler's hand;
And, greatly lavish in the glorious cause,
Grants with her Jones[16] her science and her laws—

(15) Matt. ii. 2.

(16) Of this extraordinary man—extraordinary in respect of talents, attainments, and virtues, singly perhaps unequalled, but assuredly never before so united, Mr. Gibbon (in cases of simple literature no mean commender) pronounced, that "he was equally familiar with the Year-books of Westminster, the Commentaries

Her JONES, high-gifted to fulfil her plan;
The friend of learning, freedom, truth, and man.
His were the stores of letter'd time, comprest
The mind of ages in a single breast;
The glance to catch, the patience to inquire,
The sage's temper and the poet's fire.
In him the wealth of Greece and Latium shone,
Their Themis, Clio, Erato, his own;
And his, reveal'd in all their dazzling hues,
The luscious charms of ASIA's florid Muse:
With her o'er Schiraz' roseate plain he roved,
Where Hafiz revell'd and where Sadi loved;
On Rocnabad's green marge delighted stray'd,
Heard her soft lute[17] in Mosellay's sweet shade:
Then pierced the mazy depths of Sanscrit lore,
While Brahmins own'd a light unseen before;
Bow'd to their master-pupil, and confest
With humbled brow the genius of the West[18].
But nobler cares are his: for human kind
He plies his restless energies of mind.

" of Ulpian, the Attic Pleadings of Isæus, and the Sentences of Arabian and " Persian Cadhis." From such a quarter we do not look for any panegyric upon his conscientious investigation and acceptance of Christianity.

(17) " The Lutanist Mirza Mahomed, from his sweetness called *Bulbul* (the " nightingale), in Sir WILLIAM JONES's hearing excited the emulation of his name-sake birds, in a grove near Schiraz." (PENNANT, *ib.*)

(18) " At a public *durbar*, a few days after his death, the Pundits could neither " restrain their tears for his loss, nor find terms to express their admiration at " the wonderful progress he had made in the sciences which they professed." (*Lord* TEIGNMOUTH's " *Life of Sir* WILLIAM JONES.")

Strung by that orb, beneath whose flaming ray
Inferiour natures crumble to decay,
With growing speed he presses to the goal,
And his fleet axles kindle as they roll.
'Twas his to bid admiring INDIA see,
In law[19], pure reason's ripen'd progeny:
Law, which in heaven and earth holds sovereign sway;
Whose rule the bad endure, the good obey;
Whose giant grasp o'er whirling spheres extends,
Whose tender hand the insect-speck befriends;
Her voice of quiring worlds th' harmonious mode,
And her high throne the bosom of her GOD.
Ah! short the blessing: of ætherial fire
One vivid burst, to lighten and expire!
In vain the Christian crown'd the learned name,
And boundless knowledge form'd his meaner fame:—
He falls: bewail'd from where Hydaspes laves
His sands of gold, to Thames's distant waves;
Isis and Ganges weep their sage's doom,
And mingle sorrows o'er his early tomb.
O stay your griefs, sad streams! On length of years
Rests not the age, which ruthless time reveres.
Ripe to his grave unspotted youth descends,
Though to his cheek the rose it's radiance lends;

(19) In 1794, Sir WILLIAM JONES published his translation of "The Ordinances of Menu," comprizing the Indian system of religious and civil duties. In the following lines the reader will recognize a feeble imitation of the sublime period of Hooker, which closes the first book of his "Ecclesiastical Polity."

And hoary folly ranks in childhood's train,
Taught to be wise by rolling suns in vain[20].

Nor all extinct he dies: from earth's low climes,
By frailties sullied or obscured by crimes,
To his own heaven resumed, o'er Asia's night
Still shall he shed his tutelary light;
Still kindred worth with rival zeal inspire,
And pour from Wellesley's urn transmitted fire:
Wellesley—his Eton's boast, his Oxford's pride,
Loved by each Muse, to every Grace allied;
Though still unsheathed his blazing faulchion waves,
And still fresh millions he subdues and saves;
His eye's soft beam still throws on learning's groves,
And fosters while he guards the arts he loves.

E'en now mid Hugli's groves the pile he rears,
Forms with his mind and with his presence cheers;
In gorgeous state the glittering turrets rise,
And brighter dawn illumes the Eastern skies.
There Brown, Buchanan[21] (name to learning dear)
Train the fair promise of the opening year:
From Granta's mart convey th' exhaustless store,
Her schools' ingenuous strife, her classic lore;
All that her Newton, all her Bentley taught,
Her Barrow's eloquence, her Bacon's thought;

(20) Wisd. iv. 8, 9.

(21) Provost and Vice-provost of the new College at Calcutta, both educated at Cambridge.

His eye ascends to heaven with glistening gleam,
Joy tunes his tongue, and Albion is his theme:
Albion, who now each selfish care resign'd,
And all her glories flashing on her mind,
Now that the foe high lifts his blood-stained brand,
And law and freedom hang upon her hand,
Rides proudly buoyant o'er her own blue wave,
And what she bled to win would die to save.

Beneath th' o'er-arching banyan's hallow'd gloom,
The swarthy artist plies his dexterous loom;
Light through it's filmy maze the shuttle springs,
Nor deigns to touch the gossamery strings:
The slender form vests more than Coan[23] grace,
And half seduce the eye from beauty's face.

The glance of Science, lo! fresh cares demand,
And wants and woes entreat her soothing hand.
With patient toil on each new scene she pores,
Each lonely dell, each tangled brake explores;
Dauntless the death-snake's[24] dreary haunt invades,
Led by her own effulgence through the shades:
Then, where with hues unprofitably gay
Superba reddens in the blaze of day,
Her subtlest spell bids Chemia there apply,
From the deep fibre wring it's hoarded dye;

(23) "————*Cois tibi penè videre est,*
Ut nudam."——— (Hor. Sat. I. ii. 101.)

(24) This most fatal reptile (the *Cobra de morte*) is said, perhaps fancifully, to have upon it's head the marks of a scull and two cross-bones. (Pennant, *ib.*)

Like a blue plague-spot, hapless thing! abhorr'd;
Thy touch pollution, and thy doom the sword!
Yet thee, even thee, shall heavenly Science greet,
Pierce with her sun-bright beams thy dark retreat;
Restore the blameless joys that once were thine,
And close without a cloud thy late decline.
Yes—thou again the bosom's glow shalt prove,
The hand of friendship and the lip of love;
Thee shall the village-cot protect from harms,
And Brahmins clasp thee with fraternal arms.
Nor these th' illusions of poetic land,
Whose airy splendours mock the grasping hand.
Where Bhâgulpour uplifts her front sublime,
See to her topmost summits CLEVELAND[26] climb;
Call from their craggy dens her savage swarm,
With learning polish, with affection warm;
Bid through their souls the flame ætherial thrill,
And mould their melting natures to his will.
Her tints contentment to the scene applies,
And the waste desert blooms a paradise.
But chief Religion, venerable maid,
Raptured repairs where first her footsteps stray'd,
When down to earth she came, an angel guest;
And man, yet pure, her genial presence blest.

(26) *" Is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis*
Composuit, legesque dedit."——

This Gentleman, who died in 1783, civilized the savages of his district chiefly by trusting himself amongst them unarmed, stating his benevolent purpose, and making occasional presents to their wives and children. (HODGES, and PENN. *ib.*)

On guilt's dark brow her glittering cross appears,
His sullied cheek is wash'd with pious tears;
And Ganges, hallow'd still for holier ends,
Death-stream no more[27], his wave baptismal lends.

E'en now from yonder strand I see them move,
The mild evangelists of peace and love.
Unstain'd with Afric's blood, they bend their prows
Where in his fiery belt Dahomey glows;
Hoist round the stormy Cape their straining sail,
From Yemen's mountains woo the fragrant gale,
And bear (strange merchandize!) to Asia's shore
The Gospel's bright imperishable ore:
Unsold to deal it's unbought wealth[28], their plan;
Their traffic, to redeem the soul of man.
To check their eager march, Tibetian snows
And Caggar's sands their trackless wilds oppose:
Onward they press at duty's sacred call,
O'er Decan's ghauts and China's northern wall;
Stretch uncontroll'd their Saviour's gentle reign,
And art and nature bar their way in vain.
On mosques where late the lurid crescent shone,
On pagods rear'd to shrine an idol-stone—
Seringham's walls, spread many an acre o'er,
And the proud domes of gorgeous Gazipour[29]—

(27) It is one of the objects of Hindu superstition, to be carried (if possible), when expiring, to the banks of the Ganges.

(28) Matt. x. 8. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

(29) For a description of this immense pagoda, see Craufurd's "*Sketches*," Vol. I. p. 108, note.—The mosque of Gazipour is the pride of Mahometan religious architecture.

Her banner'd cross victorious ALBION waves,
Beneath that symbol strikes, beneath that symbol saves.

O beauteous queen! O dear-loved mother-isle!
Thine is each gallant aim, each gen'rous toil.
For thee, while Fame her wreath of am'ranth twines,
And with her palm thy native oak combines,
The succour'd orphan lisps his little prayer,
And the slave's shackles crumble in thine air.
With what delight thy winding shores I tread,
Catch thy white sails by busy Commerce spread,
With labouring gaze ascend thy rocky steeps,
Or hear thy thunder bellowing o'er the deeps—
Heaven knows: and, hung th' event on vow of mine,
Thy cloudless sun should never know decline.
Hold then thy high career: while France essays,
With low intrigue, to crop thy well-won bays;
And mask'd in traffic's or religion's robe,
Merchant or preacher, traverses the globe;
To shake thee, proof in EUROPE to alarms,
On ASIA's plains with Holkar's faithless arms:
Pursue thy glorious course. Be this thy art,
Not to corrupt, but meliorate the heart:
Where'er mankind in gentile darkness lie,
Instruction's blessed radiance to supply;
O'er the oppress'd soft mercy's dews to shed,
And crush with ruin the oppressor's head.

O haste your early coming, days of gold,
Long by prophetic minstrelsy foretold:
When pure bright purple streaks the orient skies,
Rise Science, Freedom, Peace, Religion, rise!
Till from Empire to farthest Samarcand,
In one wide lustre blaze the glowing land:
And, Heaven from its guilty greatness hurl'd,
With Mercy's Lord, Messiah rule the world.

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